

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

FEAE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 IO-11 /084 W

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R 260855Z FEB 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3848

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0182

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: EVENTS ALONG THE ASMARA-MASSAWA ROAD

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REF: ASMARA 0122 (DTG 111325Z FEB 76)

1. SUMMARY: A SERIES OF EVENTS ALONG THE ASMARA-MASSAWA ROAD HAS DISRUPTED FUEL CONVOY SCHEDULES COMING TO ASMARA AND CLOUDED GENERAL FUEL SITUATION IN ASMARA. THIS DISRUPTION DATES FROM ACTIONS IN EARLY FEB IN WHICH BOTH INSURGENTS AND EPMG FORCES SUSTAINED SOME DETBACKS. THROUGHOUT FEB THERE HAVE BEEN SCATTERED INCIDENTS

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ALONG THE ROAD WHICH HAS RESULTED IN THE KILLING OF AT

LEAST FIVE ERITREANS AND THE REPORTED DEATHS OF SEVERAL MORE.

2. THE ATTACKS IN EARLY FEB (REPORTED REFTTEL) MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A DISRUPTION OF THE FUEL CONVOY SCHEDULES FROM MASSAWA TO ASMARA. PRIOR TO THESE INCIDENTS, ONE FULL CONVOY WENT TO ASMARA FIRST DAY AND EMPTY CONVOY RETURNED FOLLOWING DAY. THIS PROCEDURE PROVIDED THREE FULL CONVOYS TO ASMARA PER WEEK. SINCE THESE INCIDENTS, HOWEVER, CONVOYS HAVE BECOME SOMEWHAT IRREGULAR WITH TWO-OR THREE-DAY GAPS BETWEEN FULL AND EMPTY CONVOYS. IN ASMARA MOGAS IS READILY

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AVAILABLE THOUGH STILL RATIONED. LIKEWISE, DIESEL FUEL IS AVAILABLE IN ADEQUATE SUPPLY. AVIATION FUEL, HOWEVER, IS NOW ONLY SPORADICALLY AVAILABLE, AS EAF REPORTEDLY REQUIRES MINIMUM SUPPLY OF 60,000 LITERS AVGAS AND JET FUEL AT ANY GIVEN TIME. REASONS FOR SHORTAGE AVGAS ARE INCONCLUSIVE BUT DO APPEAR TO STEM FROM DISRUPTIONS TO CONVOYS FROM MASSAWA.

3. EARLY IN WEEK OF FEB 16 THREE ERITREANS WERE KILLED NEAR TOWN OF NEFASIT ABOUT 15 KMS FROM ASMARA ON MASSAWA ROAD. THEY REPORTEDLY KILLED BY EPMG GUARDS WHO ATTEMPTED TO EXTORT MONEY FROM THEM. ON FEB 21 ALLEGED INSURGENTS REPORTEDLY SHOT AND KILLED "INFORMER" AT 9:00 A.M. IN HEART OF GHINDA. IN RETALIATION EPMG TROOPS SEIZED FOUR PROMINENT VILLAGERS AND TOOK THEM TO THEIR DONGOLO HQS FOR INTERROGATION. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT ALL FOUR WERE EXECUTED IN RETALIATION. ON FEB 24 TWO LAL EMPLOYEES OF SEDAO (NOW ELPA) WERE KILLED IN LAND MINE EXPLOSION WITHIN TWO KMS OF GHINDA. IT IS NOT BELIEVED THAT THEIR DEATHS WERE RESULT OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT WITH UTILITY

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COMPANY, BUT INCIDENT HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUING HAZARDS ALONG MASSAWA-ASMARA LIFELINE.
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